



E-Newsletter www.house.gov/simpson **October 29, 2003**

What's Up This Week?

*The Week of October 27 to
October 31, 2003*

Wednesday

The House is scheduled to vote on **H.R. 3365, "Fallen Patriots Tax Relief Act,"** which doubles the military death gratuity benefits. Under current law, survivors of members of the military receive a \$6,000 death gratuity payment. H.R. 3365 increases the death gratuity payment to \$12,000. The higher payment is effective for deaths occurring after September 10, 2001. It also provides a change in how death gratuity payments are taxed. Under current law, only the first \$3,000 of death gratuity benefits is tax-free. H.R. 3365 provides that the full \$12,000 payment is tax-free.

The House is also scheduled to vote on **H.R. 1720, "Veterans Health Care Facilities Capital Improvement Act."** More details on this bill will be available later in the week.

The House may vote on the FY 2004 Interior Appropriations bill.



Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson tours the Idaho Food Bank in Boise with Executive Director Roger Simon in October. Last year the Idaho Food Bank distributed a record amount of 4.3 million pounds of food to needy Idahoans. For more information on how you can help feed Idaho's hungry, contact the Idaho Food Bank at 208-336-9643.

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Weekly Website

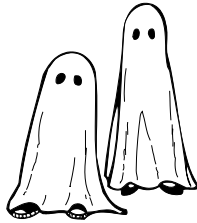
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Federal Facts

Trick or Treat!

41 million kids are expected to hit the streets this Friday in search of Halloween candy!



Idaho History Quiz

Which Idaho town served as the set for the movie
“Dante’s Peak?”

Congratulations to **Twin Falls County Commissioner Gary Grindstaff** who was the first to correctly answer that Buhl, Idaho is known as the “Trout Capitol of the World.”

Quote of the Week

“The world we have created is a product of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”

--Albert Einstein

Witnesses Testify in Favor of 9th Circuit Bill

Washington, D.C. — The House Judiciary, Courts Subcommittee heard testimony on Congressman Mike Simpson’s bill to reorganize the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Simpson’s bill (H.R. 2723) divides the U.S. Ninth Circuit into two circuits. It places California, Nevada and Arizona in the Ninth Circuit, holding regular sessions in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Idaho, along with Alaska, Guam, Hawaii, Montana, Oregon, Washington and the Northern Mariana Islands would be grouped into a newly created Twelfth Circuit Court of Appeals holding sessions in Portland and Seattle. The bill would also add seven judgeships to the new Ninth Circuit Court.

“Restructuring the circuit is the best way to cure the administrative ills affecting my court, an institution that has already exceeded reasonably manageable proportions. Nine states, twelve thousand annual case filings, forty-eight judges, and fifty-six million people are too much for any non-discretionary appeals court to handle satisfactorily. The sheer magnitude of our court and its responsibilities negatively affects all aspects of our business, including our celerity, our consistency, our clarity, and even our collegiality. Simply put, the Ninth Circuit is too big. It is time now to take the prudent, well-established course and restructure this circuit. Restructuring large circuits is the natural evolution of judicial organization. Restructuring has worked in the past. Restructuring will work again,” said Judge Diarmuid F. O’Scannlain, of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

“I’m pleased that Chairman Smith and Sensenbrenner are using my bill, HR 2723, as the vehicle for addressing the needs of the Ninth Circuit Court. Numerous bills have been introduced, but all have fallen far short of enactment. To break out of this stalemate, I decided to introduce a new bill that would make a fresh start and, hopefully, enable all of the interested parties to find common ground so that we can move forward with a new 12th Circuit encompassing the Northwest States including Idaho,” Simpson said.

Lawmakers Want Sugar Exempted From Talks

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Idaho Congressmen Mike Simpson and C.L. "Butch" Otter say opening the U.S. market to subsidized sugar imports would be devastating for American producers. So they joined 19 House colleagues in urging U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick to exempt sugar from talks on new regional or bilateral free trade agreements.

Simpson and Otter said the sugar industry still is trying to work out problems created by loopholes in the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the annual import potential of the Central American countries being considered for new free trade agreements totals 27 million metric tons - three times America's domestic consumption.

"Our sugar import program provides the only effective way of dealing with the unfair predatory trade practices in the world dump market for sugar. Without it, the U.S. sugar program cannot be sustained and the domestic industry will certainly collapse," lawmakers said in the October 16 letter to Ambassador Zoellick. "Such a result is unacceptable for a large, vital U.S. industry that is competitive and cost-efficient, but cannot compete with foreign subsidized sugar."

The letter reminded Ambassador Zoellick that the Trade Promotion Authority legislation enacted last year requires close consultation with Congress regarding sensitive agricultural products, such as sugar. Idaho's sugar beet crop alone is worth about \$200 million a year.

The lawmakers asked for an immediate briefing on what U.S. negotiators intend to propose on sugar tariffs and tariff-rate quotas at the Central American Free Trade Agreement talks in Houston, Texas, later this month. In addition, they want Ambassador Zoellick to "provide a realistic analysis of your proposal's impact on our domestic sugar industry."

Simpson, Otter Introduce SAFE Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. - -- Congressmen C.L. "Butch" Otter and Mike Simpson introduced legislation this week that would take significant steps toward addressing some of the more controversial provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act. The legislation is supported by a broad coalition of Republican, Democrat, and Independent Members of Congress who are committed to protecting civil liberties.

H.R. 3352, the Security and Freedoms Ensured Act (SAFE Act), would continue to provide law enforcement with the tools necessary for winning the fight against terrorism while safeguarding the freedoms of the American people. It would clarify and amend specific provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act, P.L. 107-56, that permit the FBI to monitor the activities of Americans—activities unrelated to terrorism—without adequate judicial oversight. The legislation focuses specifically on areas of the PATRIOT Act that have been particularly controversial. The SAFE Act:

- imposes reasonable limits on the government's authority to obtain warrants for roving wire-taps,
- controls its ability to obtain sneak and peek warrants for physical evidence,
- reinstates protections for libraries, bookstores and businesses, and
- sunsets certain provisions of the PATRIOT Act not included in the original sunset, allowing Congress to revisit them after December 31, 2005.

Homeland Security

The Homeland Security section is part of the e-newsletter's focus on bring Idahoans information on emergency preparedness. Today's topic focuses on creating an emergency family plan.

Emergency Planning for Your Family

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations.

- Be sure every member of your family **knows the phone number** and has **coins** or a **prepaid phone card** to call the emergency contact.
- **You may have trouble getting through**, or the telephone system may be down altogether, **but be patient**.

Emergency Information

Find out what kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made, are most likely to occur in your area and how you will be notified. Methods of getting your attention vary from community to community. One common method is to broadcast via **emergency radio** and **TV broadcasts**. You might hear a special siren, or get a telephone call, or emergency workers may go door-to-door.

AT WORK AND SCHOOL

Like individuals and families, schools, daycare providers, workplaces, neighborhoods and apartment buildings should all have site-specific emergency plans.

Ask about plans at the places where your family spends the most time: work, school and other places you frequent. If none exist, consider volunteering to help develop one. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead, and communicate with others in advance.

Neighborhoods and Apartment Buildings

A community working together during an emergency makes sense.

- **Talk to your neighbors** about how you can **work together** during an emergency.
- **Find out if anyone has specialized equipment** like a power generator, or expertise such as medical knowledge, that might help in a crisis.
- Decide who will **check on elderly or disabled neighbors**.
- **Make back-up plans** for children in case you can't get home in an emergency.
- Sharing plans and **communicating in advance** is a good strategy.

Schools and Daycare

If you are a parent, or guardian of an elderly or disabled adult, make sure schools and daycare providers have emergency response plans.

- Ask how they will **communicate** with families during a crisis.
- Ask if they **store** adequate food, water and other basic supplies.
- Find out if they are **prepared** to "shelter-in-place" if need be, and where they plan to go if they must get away.

Employers

If you are an employer, make sure your workplace has a building evacuation plan that is regularly practiced.

- Take a critical look at your **heating, ventilation and air conditioning system** to determine if it is secure or if it could feasibly be upgraded to better filter potential contaminants, and be sure you know how to turn it off if you need to.
- Think about what to do if your employees **can't go home**.
- Make sure you have appropriate **supplies** on hand.